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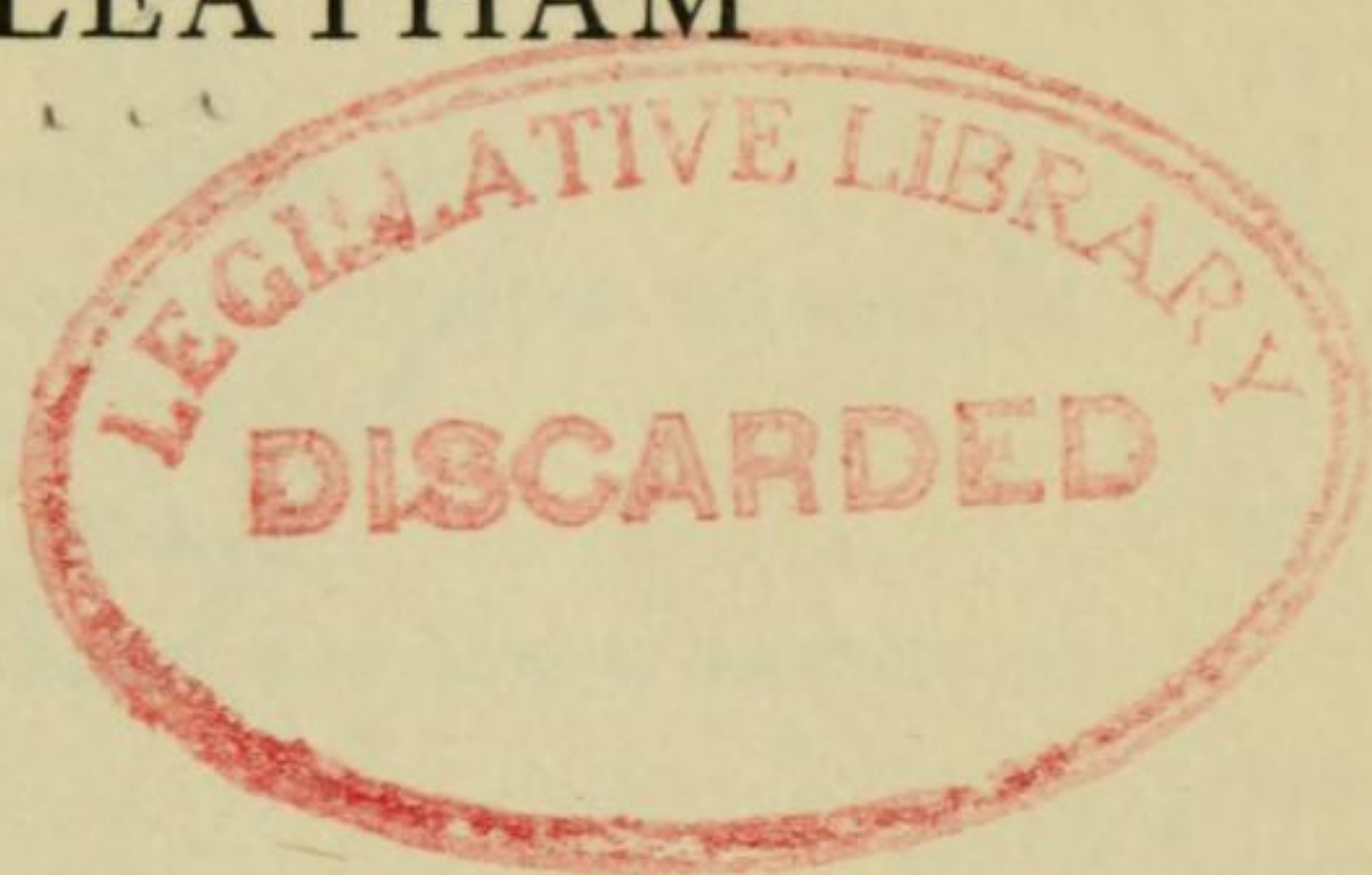


Sport in Five Continents

Sports.

BY

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WITH ILLUSTRATIONS



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Athi river in British East Africa, I was watching a wild goose which had hatched off quite a nice brood of goslings, and was swimming about with them, when there was a slight commotion in the water, and a crocodile's head appeared and caught the last swimmer of the brood. Two or three days later the goose was accompanied only by a solitary gosling, and I had no doubt that the others had fallen victims to crocodiles.

Crocodiles cover their numerous eggs with mounds of green stuff such as leaves, rushes, and grass, which ferment and so hatch the egg by the heat produced in the course of fermentation. The old crocodiles watch the nest very jealously, and attack any intruder who may chance to approach it. If the pool or lake in which a crocodile may have taken up its quarters happens to get dried up in the summer, as is frequently the case in India, the crocodile buries itself in the mud before it gets quite dry, and there sleeps for weeks until the welcome rains come, when it gets up from its bed of dry mud, none the worse for the long fast.

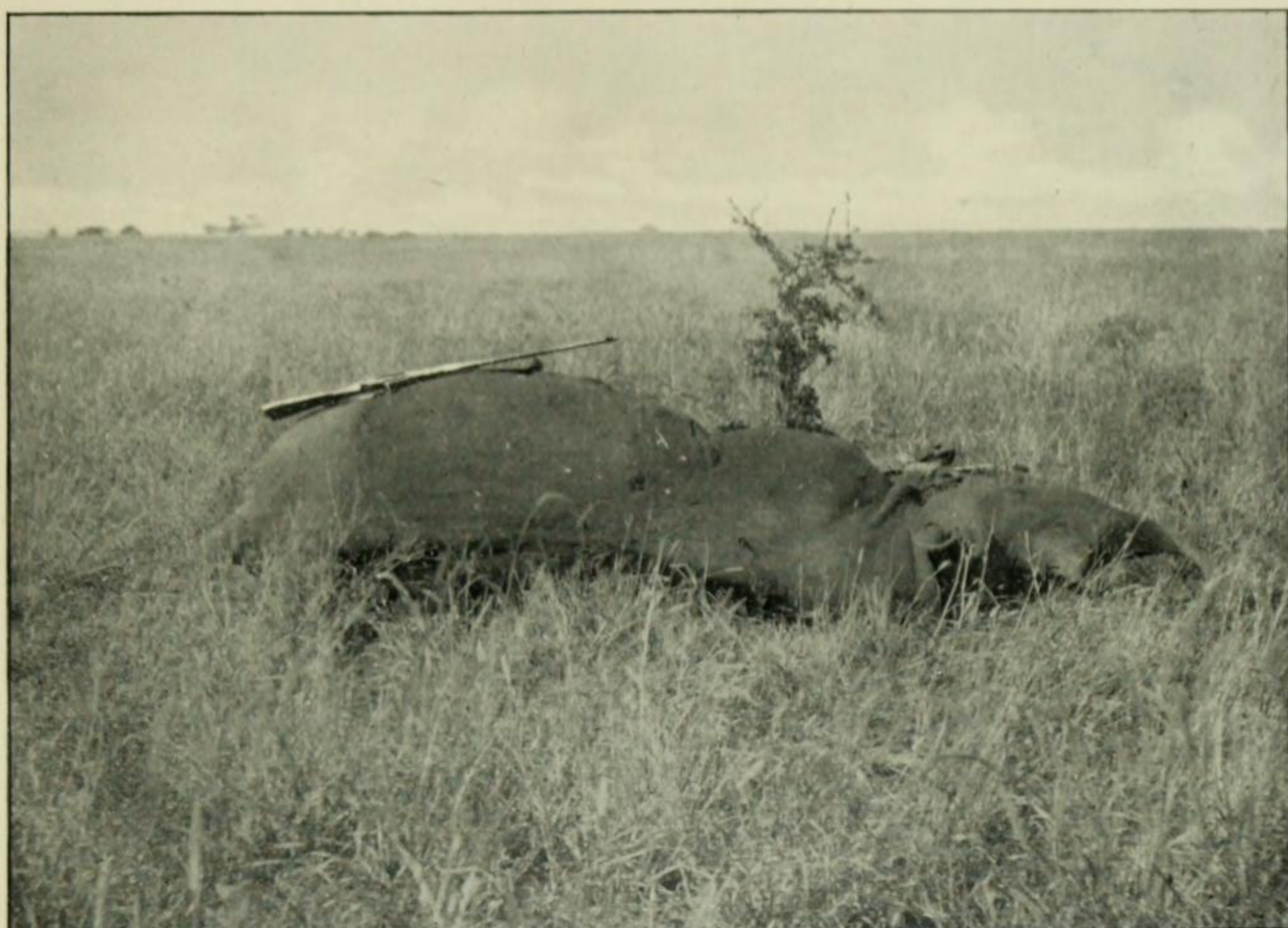
BLACK RHINOCEROS.

This is one of the most obstinate and determined of wild animals, being indeed among the very few which will often charge a man without having been previously either wounded or molested. On this account it is very much feared by the natives, who being armed with only

long spears or bows and arrows, have a very poor chance with the tough-skinned and vicious beast in the open, although in the bush, as the rhino is notoriously short-sighted, they are generally able to dodge him. The European, on the other hand, can nearly always turn him by a shot in the face, although owing to the fact that the rhino's horn practically covers all his forehead as he charges with his head up, it is nearly impossible to kill him when he is coming straight on.

The rhino has an uncomfortable habit of sleeping in the high grass during the heat of the day, and more often than not the first notice that the sportsman gets of his whereabouts is conveyed by the deep double wheeze or war-cry which is generally the prelude to a charge.

My first rhino, as I have already mentioned, I saw at a distance on an open plain, rolling on a patch of bare ground, but he caught sight of me when I was more than a hundred yards off, and not being at the time in a belligerent frame of mind, ran away. I kept following him up, and crawling when I got anywhere near him, until at last he stopped behind a tiny bush, where, although there were only a few twigs to act as cover, he evidently fancied that he was completely hidden. Being thus enabled to approach within a hundred yards of him, I shot him through the neck just in front of the shoulder, and he dropped dead in his tracks. On examining him I found two nasty sores on his back, and on taking off the skin to make walking-sticks and whips of it, discovered



A dead Rhino. The little bush is one behind which he stood thinking that it effectively hid him, and let me get up within shot of him.



Hippo's Head.

two iron barbs from native poisoned arrows, so that doubtless he was rolling to try and rub them out at the time when I first caught sight of him. There were a great many rhino in this part of East Africa, and on three consecutive days I was charged by one, while once all the water which I had twenty coolies carrying in kerosene tins on their heads was spilt as the result of a rhino charging my safari, whereupon all the men threw down their loads and shinned it up the nearest trees. As a result of this most untimely mischance, we had to walk fifty-six miles straight on end to Taveta under a scorching sun in the heat of the day without any water. How the porters, each of whom was carrying a sixty-pound load, were able to accomplish the feat was simply marvellous. I myself, though I was in pretty good training, and had only a rifle to carry, was dead beat when we got in.

It was quite amusing to see a rhino's tail stuck straight up in the air when he was either charging or running away. Wild pigs have the same peculiarity, and often when I have come across an old wild sow with a litter of young ones feeding, I have suddenly scared them by clapping my hands for the fun of seeing them skedaddle for the nearest cover with tails erect and a loud hough, hough, hough. In India, too, when we were beating for tigers in high grass, pigs would often lie very close till the elephants were almost on the top of them, and then suddenly make a

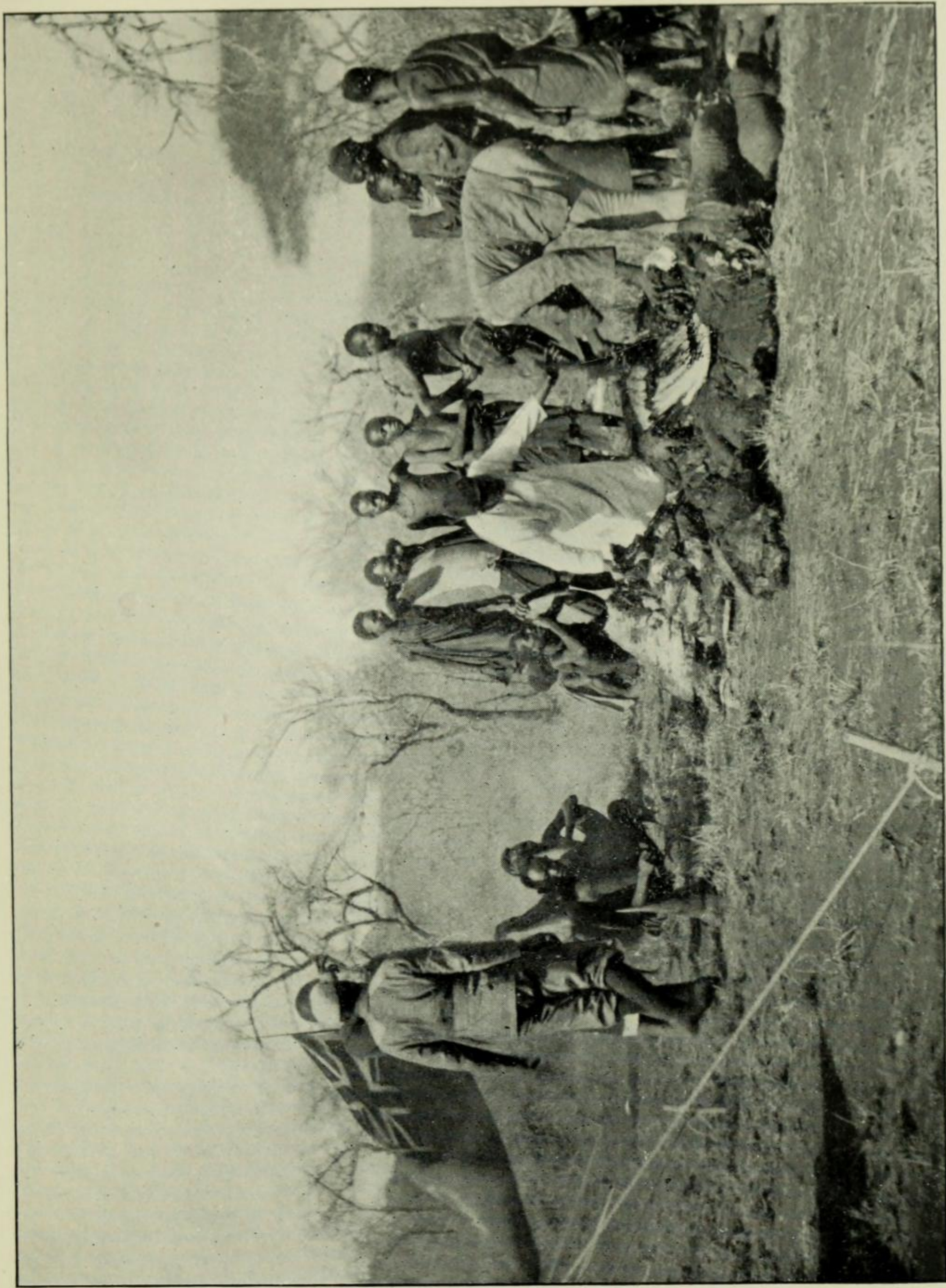
simultaneous and apparently preconcerted dash back through the line, uttering a series of very quick and sharp grunts, which coupled with the rush used to cause a terrible excitement in the line of elephants, which could not see them, but heard the grunts and squealings round their legs. To elephants, as indeed to mankind, the foe that is heard only and not seen is far and away the most alarming. Enough, however, about pigs, which later on must have a special paragraph to themselves.

To return to rhinos. On one occasion I was charged by a female of the species, who proved to be far more persistent than her fellows in her attempts to exterminate men. As a rule the rhino, when it has once charged, and has either lost sight of its enemy or has been turned by a shot, is content to let well alone and go straight on about its own business without returning to charge again. This particular lady I chanced to disturb as I was coming home one morning, and as I had been leading the way for some hours, while we walked through grass about four feet high, which is pretty stiff work, my gun-bearer had taken up the task of breaking the trail on our homeward journey. Suddenly I saw a rhino standing behind a small bush, about fifteen yards ahead. "Look out!" I shouted, and as the words left my lips, the rhino uttered the usual wheezy, double-noted war-cry, and came straight for us. At the time I was carrying my Mannlicher rifle, and the gun-bearer had my .577 Express, furnished

with stops, and as those were on, he was not able to let off the rifle as he tried to do, although I had always told him that he was not on any account to shoot. For rifle bullets fired by an inexperienced hand are apt to resemble the arrow which "finds mark the archer little meant." However, I fired into the rhino's face at once, and managing to get in two shots before she reached us, just turned her in time. I fancied at the time that she stumbled, and that somehow I must have hit her fore-leg, but of course she was out of sight in the high grass within a few yards after passing us. I ran after her, and gave her two more shots as she was turning to come back, and then, as my magazine was empty, one cartridge having been fired earlier in the morning, I looked for the gun-bearer with the other rifle, and saw him crouching under a bush, jabbering and fiddling with the hammer and triggers of the Express.

"Give it here!" I exclaimed, but either unwilling to part with his weapon of defence, or frightened out of his wits, he held it away and tried to stop my taking it. Having no time to argue the point, I briefly gave him my opinion of his conduct, and then collaring him, made myself master of the rifle and effectually finished off the rhino. And then for the first time I became aware of the presence of a tiny young rhino, and recognised that it was on her baby's account that the mother had shown so much determination. The plucky little chap was by no

means inclined to come to terms, but snorted and several times threatened to charge us, and the fear of the gun-bearer was quite ludicrous. It turned out, however, that there was yet another rhino, a two-year-old, pretty handy, and when this kept running round us a short distance off the little fellow ultimately joined him, and the pair went off together. I discovered that one of my Mannlicher bullets had hit the rhino on the head between the ears, and being a hollow-nosed bullet had expanded and failed to penetrate, but the fragments were all lodged in one of the ears. No doubt when I saw the rhino stumble she was rather stunned by the shock, and this made her rather slow in turning for the second charge, and gave me time to get my Express. On our return to camp I found there a number of Wakamba men and women, and told them that if they each would carry a load for me for three days I would give them as much meat as they could carry. When they agreed to this proposition I sent them all back to the dead rhino with my gun-bearer, and they spent the afternoon in cutting it up. On the next day every man and woman took his or her load, carrying it suspended by a strap fastened round the forehead. I have seen the hill natives in India carrying huge loads in this way, and at Darjeeling I watched a man carrying a cottage piano up to the hotel from the railway station. The loads carried for me by the Wakamba were quite small, and they took them cheerfully along in company with the far heavier loads of



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Cutting up a Rhino for Meat.

rhino meat which they were carrying on their own account. As I have already stated, the women carried the heaviest loads, no doubt according to the custom of the country, to which the modern suffragette might pay a passing visit with some advantage to herself and society at large. At the end of three days the party came to me and said that they were now going home, as they had done what they had agreed to do, and so left me. We parted company on the best of terms, and I considered that they had behaved excellently well, as they could easily have slipped off in the night as soon as they had got their rhino meat. It is evident that trades unions have not yet invaded this part of Africa, and that it is the habit of the workman to keep faith with his employer.

GIRAFFE.

My specimen of this animal I shot at the foot of Kilima-Njaro. Giraffes go about in small bands, ranging from two to twelve in number. Certainly in any case I never counted more than twelve together. They run in so awkward and shambling a fashion, and look so quaintly clumsy with their long necks stuck out, that I occasionally alarmed a band for the sole purpose of seeing them stampede. They are difficult animals to stalk, as owing to their great height they get splendid views of the surrounding country when standing to feed on the tall acacia and mimosa trees. The old giraffe becomes very grey about the face, and